



STATEMENT FOR THE WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SOCIETY DAY (WTISD) 2026

Theme: “Digital Lifelines: Strengthening Resilience in a Connected World”



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Fellow Tanzanians and stakeholders of the communication sector,

Today marks the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD), celebrated annually on 17 May since 1969 to commemorate the founding of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 1865. I am honored to join fellow ITU Member States, development partners,

regulators, operators, and the broader ICT community in marking the ITU’s 161st anniversary.

This year’s theme — “Digital Lifelines: Strengthening Resilience in a Connected World” — is a timely reminder that digital connectivity is no longer a luxury; it is essential national infrastructure. In the United Republic of Tanzania, mobile money platforms process billions of shillings in transactions every day, emergency services depend on reliable telecommunications for coordination and rapid response, and critical public services in healthcare, education, and finance are increasingly underpinned by digital networks that span mobile, fiber, satellite, and data center infrastructure. Yet crises — whether physical, cyber-related, natural, or artificial — can disrupt these services, with cascading effects on public safety, livelihoods, economic stability, and national security.

The United Republic of Tanzania has made significant strides in broadband

connectivity. 4G networks now cover 94.32% of the population, 5G deployment has reached 32.83% population coverage, and internet subscriptions stood at 58.9 million as of March 2026. Yet expanding connectivity alone is insufficient. We must also build resilient digital systems — systems that can withstand shocks, adapt to disruptions, and recover swiftly.

Recent global experiences, including extreme weather events and large-scale infrastructure outages, have demonstrated how fragile digital networks can be when resilience is not built in from the outset.

Resilience must be embedded across the entire digital ecosystem. This means designing systems with redundancy, cybersecurity preparedness, seamless interoperability, and sustainable infrastructure. It means having rapid-response capabilities — network rerouting and effective emergency communications — during crises. And it means

investing in rapid service restoration and system hardening to guard against future disruptions.

Tanzania's pursuit of digital resilience is grounded in the Tanzania Development Vision 2050, which recognizes digital transformation as a catalytic driver of the country's long-term socio-economic aspirations. Realizing this vision demands a robust, secure, and resilient digital infrastructure that supports inclusive and sustainable development across all sectors.

The Tanzania Digital Economy Strategy Framework (2024–2034) further reinforces this commitment by outlining concrete measures to protect national critical information infrastructure, data, and information assets. These include the development and operationalization of National Critical Information Infrastructure (CII) Guidelines, a National Public Key Infrastructure (NPKI), and frameworks to guard against emerging physical and cyber threats.

The United Republic of Tanzania's role as a regional connectivity hub underscores the importance of resilient digital lifelines. As of December 2025, the National ICT Broadband Backbone spans 15,167 kilometers with a capacity of 2,000 Gbps, linking all mainland regional headquarters, 122 of 139 districts, and seven neighboring countries. Work is ongoing to connect the remaining districts and the Democratic Republic of Congo. By March 2026, the United Republic of Tanzania had four active submarine cables landing in Dar es Salaam, six Internet Exchange Points (IXPs), and five data centers qualified to host mission-critical systems. Strengthening these lifelines ensures continuity of services, trade, emergency communications, and digital economies across the region — even during cyber incidents, natural disasters, or infrastructure failures.

The United Republic of Tanzania has established a robust legal and institutional framework for disaster preparedness and emergency response. The Disaster Management Act No. 7 of 2015 established the Tanzania Disaster Management Agency (TDMA), which provides the national disaster risk management framework, and mandates sector-specific emergency planning. In telecommunications, the National Emergency Telecommunications Plan (NETP) guides preparedness and response by targeting the restoration of communication services within 24 hours of a disaster. It emphasizes risk assessment, training, and simulation exercises to strengthen national readiness. The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) Spectrum Management Strategy 2024/25–2034/35 further recognizes emergency telecommunications as a critical national function.

Cybersecurity remains a fundamental pillar of digital resilience. Through TCRA, Tanzania has established the Tanzania Computer Emergency Response Team (TZ-CERT) under the Electronic and Postal Communications Act, 2010. TZ-CERT monitors, detects,

and responds to cybersecurity threats to safeguard the country's critical digital infrastructure and ensure secure, uninterrupted communications. These efforts have earned Tanzania Tier 1 "Role-Modeling" status in the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024 — a recognition of the country's leadership in national and regional cybersecurity.

Building digital resilience cannot be achieved in isolation. Digital ecosystems transcend national borders and are exposed to disruptions that can simultaneously affect multiple countries. Through partnerships with the ITU and regional bodies, Tanzania works to keep its networks strong, secure, and inclusive. As we mark this important day, let us reflect on the invisible digital lifelines that keep our economies functioning and our people connected — and renew our commitment to strengthening them for the challenges ahead.

Together, we can build a resilient, inclusive, and connected digital future for all.

I wish you all a meaningful and productive celebration of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2026.

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